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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000564

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: CHALABI, SAD DEPUTY GOVERNOR DISCUSS
DE-BAATHIFICATION ISSUES

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting with the Ambassador on February 9, Salah ad-Din (SaD) Deputy Governor General Abdullah Al-Jebarah presented De-Baathification Commission Chairman Ahmed Chalabi lists of individuals from his province who had received exemptions from the HNDBC but had yet to be returned to their employment. Chalabi explained that his commission was not responsible for implementing the orders, but pledged to work with the Deputy Governor and Ambassador on resolution of the issue. During a discussion on de-Baathification reform, Al-Jebarah said that the HNDBC draft did not contain adequate provisions for reconciliation, and noted that "it is time to turn a new page." Al-Jebarah gave Chalabi his own proposal for reform, which Chalabi agreed to review.

Exemptions Issued, But No Implementation

¶2. (C) SaD Deputy Governor Al-Jebarah complained to Chalabi that there were more than 400 school teachers who hadn't been allowed to return to work, despite the fact that they had been issued exemptions from the Higher National De-Baathification Commission (HNDBC). He said that implementation of exemptions was a widespread problem in his province. Chalabi explained that the commission was responsible for issuing orders and exemptions; however the individual ministries were responsible for actually implementing the decisions. He claimed that the commission shared Al-Jebarah's frustrations, and had lodged complaints against several ministries, including the Ministry of Education, with the Commission on Public Integrity (CPI) for non-compliance.

¶3. (C) Chalabi said that the HNDBC had received 1600 petitions for reinstatement and had approved 1300 of them to date. He pledged to expedite processing of the remaining 300, most of which he anticipated would be issued exemptions. The Ambassador welcomed Chalabi's assistance in processing the remaining cases, and requested copies of the list of school teachers, as well as the letters sent from HNDBC to CPI, in order to follow up with the Ministry of Education and Prime Minister.

Heated Discussion on Reform

¶4. (C) Commenting on the HNDBC draft, which he had previously been given to him by the SaD PRT, Al-Jebarah stated that provincial leadership was looking for reconciliation and "this law is 100% against reconciliation." Al-Jebarah said that there were problems in SaD which required the full participation of the population. He noted that many of the engineers, teachers and other professionals in SaD had been

members of the Baath Party, and that they should not be excluded from reconciliation efforts. Chalabi said that while he personally agreed, there were different problems in the South, where people still harbor strong fears and anger towards the Baath Party. Chalabi noted that although the Shia Coalition may tell USG officials differently, they privately tell him that his draft is too lenient. He insisted that the commission had worked to strike a balance between competing interests, and that its existence continued to successfully prevent a large scale massacre of former Baathists.

15. (C) The Ambassador stressed that the De-Baathification reform law must serve the purpose of reconciliation while providing accountability for those with blood on their hands. He emphasized the need for a clear, simple draft that eliminated blanket sanctions on all but the highest level Baathists, as well as the complex bureaucracy. Chalabi agreed that it would be nice to get rid of the bureaucracy, but noted that he was "not sure it is possible." In the end, he agreed to consider the Deputy Governor's proposal.

Deputy Governor Continues to Receive De-Baath Orders

16. (C) PRT Salah ad Din raised the issue of the Deputy Governor's own de-Baathification order with Chalabi. A former firqa member, Al-Jebarah had applied for and been granted an exemption. Despite this, he continues to receive de-Baathification orders, most recently in late 2006. The PRT is frustrated by the continued threat that hangs over the heads of those who are engaging with the PRT and CF elements and working effectively on reconciliation and other issues

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important to U.S. efforts here. Chalabi claimed that he had no knowledge of the Deputy Governor's case, but said that he would look into it at his request. Embassy will work to solve problems of Salah ad-Din schoolteachers mentioned in paragraph 2.
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